

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

HELD AT WATLING HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE

ON THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2017

Present: Councillors Carole Hegley (Chairman), John Chatterley, Eugene Ghent, Peter Hollick and Nigel Young (Central Bedfordshire Council CBC). Liz Jones (Vice-Chairman), John Kane, Gloria Martin, Pat Staples and Andy Whayman (Dunstable Town Council, DTC).

In Attendance: Hugh Garrod (Promoting Dunstable), Roger Pepworth (South Beds Friends of the Earth), Sharon Warboys (Town Centre Champion), Rhea Yeung (Grove Theatre), Councillor Ann Sparrow (Dunstable In Bloom) and ViViane Vayssieres with David Ashlee – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Clare Brett (Town Centre Manager) (DTC) and Peter Fraser – Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support, Paul Salmon (Traffic Manager) and Ingrid Hooley (Programme Enabling Manager) (CBC).

Apologies for Absence: Jason Buckley (Quadrant Shopping Centre), Sharon Knott (DLDD Trust) and John Gelder (Voluntary and Community Action).

Members of the public: 0

19. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOVLED: i.) that Councillor Hegley be appointed Chairman of the Dunstable Joint Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year 2017/18.

ii.) that Councillor Jones be the vice-chairman of the Dunstable Joint Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year 2017/18.

20. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on Thursday 4 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Staples declared a pecuniary interest regarding any issues to be discussed relating to Dunstable Market.

22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Ed Harrison of Deakin-White to the meeting and proposed the co-option of the Pride in Dunstable Business Group, a monthly business networking group Ed represents, to the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Pride in Dunstable Business Group is co-opted on to the Dunstable Joint Committee.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to update Members on the Splash Park. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed that Bennett's Splash and Splashside Café had been completed and would be open to the general public from 1.00 pm the following day. It was reported that there had been a lot of positive social media engagement, including from people outside the area and Members were encouraged to visit the new facility. It was further reported that an official opening was planned for 21 July and invitations would be sent out once the details had been finalised.

23. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were in attendance.

24. THEMED DISCUSSION

The Traffic Manager (CBC) updated Members on progress with High Street regeneration. It was confirmed that Ringway Jacobs was the contractor and that CBC and partners were looking to increase pedestrian movement, improve the public realm, redesign the street, enhance the historic and recreational environment, discourage rat running and provide a sense of place to ultimately rejuvenate the High Street.

It was anticipated that the scheme would cost £8-9 million and whilst some initial works would take place, there would also need to be a phased programme. The current anticipated timescale for the works and consultation was given to the Committee.

A number of options were being investigated and a design workshop had taken place on 20 June. All proposed designs would be subject to review and assessment before the consultation process. It was confirmed that the previous pre-consultation had been used to progress the designs to date.

A lengthy discussion took place and the Committee raised concerns about the level of progress and that the consultation must include the Joint Committee and Town Council.

Members were reminded of the public advanced briefing, the details of which were available on the CBC website.

The Chairman raised concerns about the removal of railings from a safety perspective and it was confirmed that significant changes would be fully road safety audited.

ACTION: Chairman and Councillor Young to bring consultation to the Committee as soon as possible.

Members requested a timetable for the works and further details on initial quick win/non-invasive works.

ACTION: Councillor Young to provide a further timetable for the Chairman to communicate to Members when available.

It was requested that the data and statistical information such as pollution levels be made available through the consultation to help inform a decision to be taken on the preferred option.

The Traffic Manager was thanked for attending and sharing the update.

The Traffic Manager then went on to discuss the area wide weight limit, detrunking and re-classification. The high street had now been detrunked and the link roads built. Members were informed that CBC and Highways England were in discussion about outstanding works on the road. The huge scale of the weight ban area was emphasized and it was reported that 600 signs would need to be changed or installed to complete the ban. It was confirmed that the ban was in place but in order for enforcement to be undertaken the signage needed completion and a timescale for the delivery was in place.

Work had been due to start but had been delayed due to sub-contracting issues that had now been resolved. It was confirmed that relevant approvals with regards to lighting and power networks had been received.

The Chairman commented on the work done on the highways and the positive impact on the town of the link roads.

CBC Road safety, Communications and Business regeneration teams had been working on identifying potential offenders to work with transport managers to raise awareness of the ban and new routes. Members were reminded however that there were exemptions to the ban for those making deliveries and who have depots in the vicinity. It was reported that officers were also engaged with two members of the public who were assisting by collecting data on lorries and companies. Business Regeneration Team offices were also making presentations to companies and Amazon and Superdrug were working with CBC to promote the new routes.

A flyer had also been produced to raise awareness of the ban and that enforcement will follow.

Finally it was reported that officers were also working with a company who produce satellite navigation to update their routes.

25. ESTATE REGENERATION DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG) GRANT

The Programme and Enabling Manager reported on CBCs successful application for £186,000 from a DCLG grant to be spent on improving the Manshead and Northfields wards areas.

ACTION: Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to circulate information on the background of the grant to Members, detailing how the money can be spent.

It was confirmed that the funds had already been received by CBC and were ringfenced for a three year period from April 2017 and that officers were continuing to investigate other funding opportunities.

The Programme and Enabling Manager made a request for volunteers to assist and form a working group for community engagement.

ACTION: DTC to organise a working group of Joint Committee Members to discuss spend proposals.

26. REPORTS FROM COOPTED OR OUTSIDE BODIES

The representative of Promoting Dunstable reported on the launch event for Priory 20:20 vision that had taken place a few weeks ago. The project would involve the closure of the church in 2020 to install underfloor heating, lower the floor, install new chairs and undertake refurbishment. A process of raising awareness was currently being undertaken and funds and support for the project were being sought.

ACTION: The representative for Promoting Dunstable to send the Town Centre Manager details on the project for the next meeting of the Committee.

The representative for Dunstable in Bloom reported that the latest meeting had taken place the previous Monday. The judging had been scheduled for 17 July and the route the judges would take had been chosen and included sites nominated for special awards.

It was noted that positive comments had been received from residents regarding the town centre floral displays.

27. ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET UPDATE

The Town Centre Manager took questions on the Action Plan report and presented further costings for the Christmas programme 2017. Discussion took place around the Christmas programme and budget.

RESOLVED: that £10,000 budget be allocated for the synthetic ice rink.

RESOLVED: that the budget for the Christmas Tree Carols and Torchlight Procession lighting finale be increased to £6,500 for 2017.

Members then went on to discuss the Christmas in Dunstable leaflet. The representative of the Grove Theatre confirmed that the cast of the pantomime would be involved in the Christmas programme.

ACTION: that the Chairman form a Christmas sub-committee with interested parties.

28. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL- UPDATE ON SERVICES

The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support took questions on the Central Bedfordshire Council report. It was confirmed that the local plan would be out in the following week.

Which units were included in the CBC vacancy monitoring rates were questioned as the figure differed from the one provided by DTC.

Members were informed that the tendering for the High Street Improvement Scheme building contractor had been completed and works should be taking place from September.

It was confirmed that the Dunstable Leisure Centre was now closed for the refurbishment works.

A question was raised as to whether parking penalty charge notices referred to on street or car park offences.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to clarify.

A discussion took place on the monitoring of air quality in the area and this could be a topic/update for the Committee in future.

It was reported that the Cheering Volunteering event had gone extremely well.

An application had been received for the Community Grant Scheme. As the application had been received too late to consider at the meeting, it was requested that delegated authority be given to a sub-group to consider this and future applications. It was further suggested that the sub-group would usually meet to consider the applications and then bring recommendations to the Committee. This would not happen on this occasion however, due to the timing of the application and next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to liaise with the Chairman to set up the virtual group to consider the application. The Chairman, Councillors Jones, Martin and Hollick to form the group.